

welcome

As you may know, domestic violence crosses ethnic, racial, age, national origin, sexual orientation, religious and socioeconomic lines. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that one million women suffer nonfatal violence by an abuser every year.

Fortunately, there is a confidential mail-forwarding program administered by the Secretary of State's Office called Safe at Home that helps Californians escape abusive partners. This program could be your new beginning to a brighter future and anonymity from people looking to harm you.

The Safe at Home Program currently serves over 2,400 survivors of domestic violence and stalking. The program allows victims to suppress their DMV records, complete a confidential name change and register to vote secure in the knowledge that their home address will not be made available to the public. Effective January 1, 2007, two pieces of legislation I authored as a state senator became law.



SB 1062 allows sexual assault victims to participate in Safe at Home and SB 1743 removes the requirement that participants petitioning the court for a confidential name change have that request published in a local newspaper. As Secretary of State, I will continue my long-time role as an advocate for protecting the rights of victims of domestic abuse, stalking and sexual assault and to assist them in leading new lives free from abuse and fear.

I invite you to examine the program and its many features. Safe at Home may offer you added peace of mind and new options in life as you begin to rebuild your future.


Every Californian should feel and be safe at home.

Sincerely,

Debra Bowen
Secretary of State



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safe at ^{california} home



a project of California Secretary of State **Debra Bowen**

“ I’d like to take this time to thank everyone affiliated with this exceptional program for the peace of mind and safety it has afforded me for the past four-plus years. I appreciate what you have done and want to say a ‘from-the-heart’ thank you! ”
— Safe at Home participant

safe at home

Since 1999, Safe at Home — the California Secretary of State’s mail forwarding program — has offered more than 3,800 women, men and children a safe mailing address for victims of stalking, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

When you qualify for the program, a Safe at Home post office box in Sacramento becomes your new mailing address. First-class mail is packaged weekdays in strict confidence and forwarded to your confidential California home address.



www.CaSafeAtHome.org



WHAT we OFFER

Voter Registration

Program participants can have their voter registration information kept entirely confidential from campaigns, pollsters and the media by completing a Confidential Voter Registration Affidavit at the time of enrollment, or at the Registrar of Voters/County Clerks office. Safe at Home participants receive absentee voter status so they can vote by mail.

Name Change Confidentiality

After completing an Intent of Name Change form with Safe at Home, you can petition for your confidential name change at your county’s superior court.

For additional privacy and protection, effective January 1, 2007, Safe at Home participants who petition for a confidential name change will not have to publish the change in local newspapers.



Confidentiality for Children

For families meeting the criteria for Safe at Home, parents or guardians may apply for identification cards for each child needing protection from violence. All the benefits of a Safe at Home adult participant apply to children as well. Additionally, parents and guardians can notify their child’s school of the child’s participation in the program. Program guidelines that inform the school about the child’s involvement will be added to the child’s school folder, which provides another layer of protection from anyone asking for names and addresses.



PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE

If you are interested in participating in Safe at Home, you should make an appointment with one of the 325 designated enrolling agencies — domestic violence shelters or district attorney’s offices — in California. You can find locations of enrolling agencies online at www.CaSafeAtHome.org or by calling our offices at 877.322.5227.

When you meet with an enrolling agency counselor and understand the purpose of the Safe at Home Program, the counselor will determine if you qualify and assist you in completing the application process. You will need to bring a current restraining order or police report when you meet with the enrolling agency staff or qualifying documentation for reproductive health care applicants.

When you have completed the enrollment materials, the enrolling agency will forward your application packet to Safe at Home for review. If your application is approved, you will receive a Safe at Home participant package in the mail within 15 days. The participant package contains your certification of enrollment and an official Identification Card (ID) with an address for use in business or public transactions that require a residence or mailing address. State and local agencies must accept the Safe at Home address when you present your ID card.



“ Safe at Home has given me a whole new lease on life; that I can be safe, that I’m not alone. ”

— Safe at Home participant

QUESTIONS & answers

Q. What is Safe at Home?

A. It is a confidential mail-forwarding program administered by the Secretary of State’s office. If you are a victim of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault, the program offers a substitute address to use in place of your real home address.

Contact 877.322.5227 for more information.

Q. What are some other advantages of enrolling in Safe at Home?

A. In addition to the confidential mail forwarding service, Safe at Home participants can enroll in other optional services, which include records suppression for the California Department of Motor Vehicles and confidential voter registration and name change.

Q. How does Safe at Home work?

A. Once you have enrolled and are accepted into the program, all first-class mail will be forwarded to you from your Safe at Home PO Box within 48-hours. Packages, magazines and third-class mail however, will not be forwarded to your Safe at Home post office box. Certified mail received is signed for by Secretary of State staff and then packaged and forwarded like all other mail.

Q. Who can enroll in Safe at Home?

A. Any California resident who is a victim of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault and meets the enrollment criteria may enroll in Safe at Home.

Enrollees must have an address that is not known to their abuser, stalker, or assaulter.

Q. How do I enroll in Safe at Home?

A. Safe at Home contracts with over 325 enrolling agencies throughout California. These cooperating agencies will work with you on completing the necessary paperwork to enroll. Just visit the Safe at Home website www.CaSafeAtHome.org or call 877.322.5227 for a list of enrolling agencies throughout California. Enrolling agency staff can help you if you run into any problems filling out the forms.

Q. What kind of documents do I need to start the enrollment process?

A. You will need court documents proving you are a victim of domestic abuse, stalking or sexual assault. It could be a police report or restraining order.

Safe at Home also accepts letters from doctors, clergy or victim advocates. You can get more information by going to the Safe at Home website at www.CaSafeAtHome.org or by calling 877.322.5227.